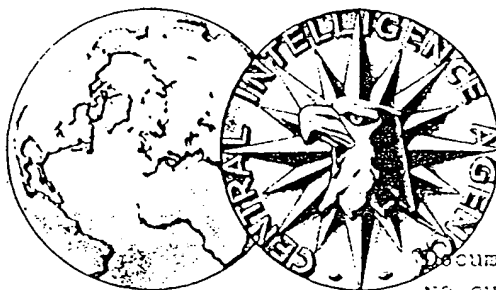


REACTION OF WEST GERMAN POLITICAL
PARTIES TO THE DECISIONS OF THE
TRIPARTITE LONDON CONFERENCE



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REACTION OF WEST GERMAN POLITICAL PARTIES TO THE DECISIONS
OF THE TRIPARTITE LONDON CONFERENCE

SUMMARY

Reaction of the political parties in Western Germany to the decisions of the London Conference is generally unfavorable, particularly because of the proposed internationalization of the Ruhr and the restrictions which have been placed on the authority of the provisional West German Government. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU), which seems likely to dominate the new provisional government, will be forced to assume responsibility for unpopular policies of the Western Powers while lacking the necessary authority to represent and be responsive to the demands of its constituents. It is therefore likely to use every possible means to evade responsibility for current conditions. It is also likely to lose strength to the rightist parties. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), which will probably be second in strength only to the Christian Democrats in the provisional government, desires a nationalization of Ruhr industry or else the creation of an international industrial bloc composed of the Ruhr and adjacent foreign industrial areas.

The Communist Party will continue to function as an implement of Soviet policy. The rightist splinter parties, which have appeared since 1945, will gradually merge into a loose-knit single political organization claiming to be the defender of German interests against the intervention of foreign powers. Although retarded by German dependence on the Western Powers for protection against the USSR, the general trend toward the rightist parties will continue, and the more moderate CDU and SPD can be expected to lose strength to the more radical political organizations of the Left and Right.

Note: The information in this report is as of 8 July 1948.

The intelligence organizations of the Departments of State, Army, and the Navy have concurred in this report; the Air Intelligence Division, Air Intelligence Directorate, Department of the Air Force, had no comment.

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1. The Tripartite Conference in London has presented western Germans with the task of creating a provisional government for the three zones of Western Germany, and with a program which, in effect, places the highly industrialized Ruhr area under foreign control. The existing political parties, which are thus obliged to create a popular government within a framework to which they are restricted by the Western Powers, must also justify to the German populace their acceptance of the removal from German control of the most highly industrialized area in Germany. This dual task will be made all the more difficult by a resentful German attitude resulting from thwarted nationalistic aspirations, the inability of the Western Powers as yet to improve the general welfare appreciably, and an inherent German hostility to foreign intervention.

2. At present the main concern of western Germans is with their own economic welfare. They desire economic assistance from the Western Powers, and the protection by these powers against the USSR. For these reasons the presence of the Western Powers in Germany is tolerated as a temporary and unavoidable necessity. More especially, however, the Germans desire an end to foreign occupation and foreign controls, particularly over German trade. If the present economic situation improves, and some *modus vivendi* short of war is reached between East and West, the bulk of the German population can be expected to support any rightist program promising an end to foreign intervention. For the accomplishment of this objective, they will also support any attempt to exploit the East-West struggle. The moderate political parties, the CDU and SPD, will probably not survive without substantial shifts in their policies, because of their apparent acceptance of Allied policies. The proposed provisional West German Government, in its present form, will also have slight chance for survival without continued foreign control.

3. Under existing conditions the German population has no influential vehicle for the expression of its opinions except the political parties: the Christian Democrats (CDU), the Social Democrats (SPD), the Communists (KPD), and the group of rightist splinter parties. With the exception of the KPD, the parties express the will of their constituents to the greatest extent possible under the Allied Occupation program, in order to maintain their political following and to avoid retaliatory action by any independent German government which might be formed in the distant future.

4. As a result, the political parties in Western Germany can be expected to disapprove of the decisions of the Tripartite Conference for the following reasons:

- a. internationalization of the Ruhr will be considered a serious violation of German sovereignty, comparable almost to the severance, from Eastern Germany, of the area under Polish control;
- b. territorial adjustments in Western Germany are similarly regarded;
- c. the provisional West German Government outlined by the Tripartite Conference grants far less autonomy than is desired by the Germans; and

d. these decisions were imposed on the Germans by foreign powers.

Although these objections are common to all the Western German political parties, the specific reaction to some of the decisions varies somewhat from party to party, as shown below.

5. The Christian Democratic Union (CDU), with its Bavarian component, the Christian Social Union (CSU) remains, despite recent reverses in local elections, the dominant party in Western Germany. Generally conservative, but with elements ranging from moderate to reactionary, this party controls the present Bizonal Government and can be expected to dominate any provisional West German government as well.

Reasons for CDU-CSU opposition to the Tripartite program may be outlined as follows:

a. opposition to internationalization of the Ruhr and any consequent expropriation of German industrial interests, whose management is probably supporting the CDU at present;

b. opposition to the restricted jurisdiction of the proposed provisional government, since the CDU, as the party in power will be forced to assume responsibility for unpopular Allied policies without receiving sufficient power to fulfill the desires of its constituents;

c. opposition to the creation of a government which does not contribute to, or directly plan for, national unification. (The CDU's desire for unification of the Soviet Zone with the West is based, in part, on the illusion that a non-Communist parliamentary majority can effectively control a militant Communist minority and prevent such a minority from blocking necessary legislation.)

The six-power decisions are likely to result in the following developments affecting the CDU:

a. an endeavor to convince the population that the party is attempting to defend German interests despite enforced obedience to the dictates of the Occupying Powers;

b. exploitation of the unpopularity of the decision to internationalize the Ruhr, in order to focus German resentment on the Occupying Powers rather than on the CDU;

c. legislation designed to increase the scope of governmental jurisdiction and to place the Occupying Powers in the position of vetoing measures desired by the population; and

d. despite these maneuvers, the CDU will probably suffer long-term loss of strength to rightist parties, which are not yet compromised by cooperation with the Occupying Powers and may be able to pursue a more aggressive and nationalistic course in the role of champions of the German nation against the Occupying Powers.

6. The Social Democratic Party (SPD), representing non-Communist German labor, can be expected to be second to the CDU in the provisional government. The SPD has a centralized party organization and has cooperated with the US and the UK primarily because of its fear of Soviet control over all Germany.

The Social Democratic Party is opposed to the Tripartite program in relation to:

- a. internationalization of the Ruhr, especially because it removes that area from German control while the issue of ownership of its industry is unsettled. (The SPD would prefer either a nationalization of this industry or the creation of an international industrial bloc composed of the Ruhr and adjacent foreign industrial areas);
- b. the restricted jurisdiction of the provisional government, because labor could expect more influence over such a government than over Allied occupation authorities;
- c. the federalistic structure of the proposed government which is opposed to SPD desire for centralization.

The six-power decisions will probably result in the following developments in the Social Democratic Party:

- a. reluctance to endorse of Allied policies in Germany resulting in parliamentary tactics and legislation designed to embarrass the CDU or the Occupying Powers; under present conditions, however, the SPD will not resort to strikes, slowdowns, or exploitation of labor unrest, particularly in the Ruhr; and
- b. a loss of party strength because: (1) although playing the role of an opposition party, it is compromised by its association with the Occupation Powers and with the Bizonal Economic Council; (2) the centralized control of the party or organization is believed to have been relaxed (extent unknown); and (3) because, should it participate in the provisional government, it would be unable to fulfill basic points of its program, thus satisfying demands of the rank and file. As a result, it would in the long term lose strength to the Communists, and to rightist or more nationalistic political groupings as well.

The Communist Party (KPD) in Western Germany can be regarded as an implement of Soviet policy. The KPD cannot be expected to act independently of the Kremlin. Its reaction to the Tripartite decisions will directly reflect only the current attitude of the USSR.

8. Since 1945 a number of rightist splinter parties have appeared in Western Germany, chiefly in the US-UK Zones. Under various names, such as Liberal Democrats (LDP), National Democrats (NDP), Deutsche Bloc, Bavarian Party, and others, these groups are still uncompromised in German eyes by cooperation with the Occupying Powers. They are linked by the common factors of open or implied opposition to foreign intervention and their appeal to nationalistic and irredentist elements such as ex-Nazis and refugees from German ethnic areas to the East. Until the present, these rightist parties have had no parliamentary government in which they could acquire effective representation and have been hampered by Allied restrictions.

The rightist splinter parties are opposed to the Tripartite program because of their objections to:

- a. internationalization of the Ruhr, not only because they regard it as a violation of German sovereignty, but because of the consequent expropriation of German industrial interests which may be supporting these parties as well as the CDU;

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b. foreign intervention and restrictions on the jurisdiction of the proposed provisional government which prevent their acquisition of power;

c. the federalistic structure of that government to which (with the possible exception of the Bavarian Party) they are opposed.

Developments in the rightist splinter parties, resulting from the six-power decisions are likely to be:

a. gradual merger into one political organization as minor differences are settled;

b. exploitation of the unpopularity of the internationalization of the Ruhr and the new governmental structure through propaganda within Germany and the Allied countries;

c. opposition to the dominant role of the CDU and SPD, and attempts to brand the two parties as collaborationists;

d. attempts to convince the Western Powers that in exchange for autonomy, this rightist element can assure the West of German support in any East-West struggle;

e. attempts to assume the role of defender of German interests by opposition to policies of the Occupying Powers and by parliamentary tactics (the general platform would be opposition to foreign intervention, and a centralized, unified, non-Communist German state); and

f. an increase in strength drawn from the CDU and from large elements of the population which at present have little interest in politics.

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